

**Tomorrow's Leaders College to Work Pipeline Pilot**  
**SFOP0005934 – Q&A**

1. Can MEPI please clarify whether the applicant is anticipated to work with the American University of Cairo (AUC), American University of Beirut (AUB), and Lebanese American University (LAU) to assist the upcoming 57 TL graduates to find Fellowship opportunities while they are still attending university or whether the applicant is to support graduates to find employment opportunities after their graduation?
  - A. The applicant is anticipated to work with AUC, AUB, and LAU. Working with these universities, the applicant is encouraged to design a plan that helps graduates secure employment in the MENA region upon graduation, preferably in their country of origin. Whether the program starts with a fellowship while students are still attending university or with employment after graduation is up to the applicant to propose in their design. This initiative is not intended to replace the existing internship requirement that TL students must fulfill prior to graduation as part of the TL program.
2. The solicitation states, "...the first increment will provide funding for the initial 12-18 months of the award (anticipated: October 1, 2019 to September 30, 2020)." As this timeframe is only 12 months, can MEPI please confirm that the first increment of programming may run until March 30, 2021? Should the applicant then additionally budget Years 2-4 at 12-month increments, totaling up to \$5,000,000?
  - A. It is fine for an applicant to propose an initial award period of up to eighteen (18) months (to March 30, 2021) for the planned initial funding increment of \$1 million if necessitated by program design, considering such factors as program start-up and student academic and graduation schedules. However, please note that the proposed award period of performance may not exceed five (5) years in total.
3. Does MEPI envision the Pipeline Pilot developing employment opportunities for graduates in Egypt, given that it is no longer a MEPI country?
  - A. Although Egypt is no longer a MEPI country, the TL program continues to operate. We envision the pilot program to develop employment opportunities for TL graduates in Egypt at some point.
4. Would MEPI consider releasing data on current TL students, including their numbers by university, by home country, by major, by graduation year, and by gender?
  - **Total of students in each university:** AUB 68 students (36 females); AUC 91 students (57 females); and LAU 35 students (18 females).

- **Students' countries of origin:** Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, West Bank, Yemen.
- **Majors:** Biology, Business Administration, Chemistry, Computer Science, Economics, Banking and Finance, International Business, English Language, Geology, History, Architecture, Mathematics, Media and Communications, Medical audiology Sciences, Nutrition and Dietetics, Petroleum studies, Philosophy, Physics, Political Studies, Psychology, Public Administration, Journalism, Applied Economics, Biology, Civil Engineering, International affairs.
- **Graduation year:** 48 students graduating in 2019, 63 graduating in 2020, 59 graduating in 2021, and 24 graduating in 2022

5. Would MEPI clarify what it means by employment opportunities?
  - A. Employment opportunities means ensuring students have a paying job in a professional context in their field which also include a pathway to leadership. The pilot was designed after the Presidential Management Fellows Program model ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Presidential\\_Management\\_Fellows\\_Program](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Presidential_Management_Fellows_Program)).
6. A recipient *Gender Integration E-course* is referenced on page #6 of the NOFO, though the hyperlink is inactive. Please provide the active hyperlink for this e-course.
  - A. Thank you for alerting us to this. Please use the following link instead: [https://encompassworld.com/elearningfiles/DOS/DOS\\_Gender\\_Integration\\_E-Course/story\\_html5.html](https://encompassworld.com/elearningfiles/DOS/DOS_Gender_Integration_E-Course/story_html5.html)
7. The location of where the Annual Stocktaking Sessions are to be held is currently TBD, but can NEA please provide a list of cities being considered in order for Per Diem, airfare, and other travel costs to be estimated and included in the applicant's budget?
  - A. Most likely stocktaking sessions will be held in Europe. For 2019 for instance, MEPI is exploring options in Croatia. In 2018, the stocktaking session was in Cyprus.
8. Does NEA anticipate giving stipends while students are on fellowship as part of the total budget for the program?
  - A. Prior to graduation, students receive modest monthly living stipends from their universities while studying or engaged in approved internships. Any expenses required beyond that should be proposed as part of the Pipeline Pilot budget.
9. What is the target percentage of employment for graduates as a result of this intervention?
  - A. Of participating students, the target percentage of employment is at least 50%.
10. Would the program cover training for companies to help them and their HR departments include recent graduates in their workforce

- A. Yes the program could cover training for companies to help them and their HR departments include recent graduates in their workforce. MEPI has to approve the training.
11. Please advise whether or not Syrian and Yemeni students – displaced within some of the other MENA countries also participating in this program – may participate in this program.
- A. Syrians and Yemeni students may participate in this program as long as prospects to increase their employment in the MENA region are increased.
12. Does the pilot phase need to include all the 57 students in the three universities, or can be limited to those of two universities as a starting point?
- A. No, the pilot need not include all three universities initially. The first year could be limited to a smaller number of students or universities. For example, the pilot could be limited to students from LAU and AUB in the first year but the design should anticipate expansion to all three universities.
13. Is the planned project aiming at placing the TL students upon graduation, or key outcome is to enhance their career readiness, leadership, and employability with the aim of landing successful employment or having their own entrepreneurial initiatives.
- A. A key outcome for this program is to enhance students' career readiness, leadership, and employability with the aim of landing successful employment in the MENA region. A smaller percentage of students (about 50%) are expected to be placed in an employment opportunity in the MENA region upon graduation.
14. The introduction to Section I, Funding Opportunity Description, states that the Tomorrow's Leaders program provides scholarships "to attend college at an American-accredited university in the Middle East." Is this description a requirement for the grant?
- A. Yes. Only TL students who participate in this program at AUB, AUC and LAU are eligible to benefit from this initiative.
15. If it is a grant requirement, is programmatic accreditation from the U.S. sufficient, or is regional accreditation necessary?
- A. To be eligible to sponsor scholarships for TL students, universities have to have received full accreditation from the U.S. and cannot be a satellite university.
16. Can grant funding be used for leadership development programs, for example, as described in Section I C, Project Design, or should funds be used exclusively for undergraduate education?
- A. Yes. Grant funds can be used for leadership development programs.
17. Please confirm that the project is restricted to TL graduates of four-year undergraduate programs from American University of Beirut, American University of Cairo, and Lebanese American University.

- A. Yes. The program is restricted to TL graduates of four-year undergraduate programs from American University of Beirut, American University of Cairo, and Lebanese American University.

18. If the project is funded beyond year 1, will the activities continue to be restricted to these three universities?

- A. As more universities become eligible for the TL program and submit successful applications, the program might expand. However, currently, activities are restricted to work with students in the TL programs at these three universities.

19. On p. 2, paragraph 3, the NOFO states that student home countries may include but are not necessarily limited to Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia, and Yemen. The next paragraph, highlighted in red, states that applications that focus on activities in or participants from countries and territories other than those listed will not be considered. The language in these two paragraphs appears to be inconsistent. Could you please provide a clarification?

- A. The NOFO lists the home countries of students who are currently eligible to benefit from this funding. It is possible that students from some other Middle East and North Africa (MENA) countries may be eligible for inclusion in the TL Scholarship and/or TL Pipeline programs in the future. The successful applicant would be consulted as those changes occur. However, please note that programming in countries outside the MENA region is not allowed. Programming in UAE and Turkey in the region is also not allowed.

20. On p. 6, the NOFO states that exchange activities with other countries or territories are not allowed under this announcement. Please confirm that exchange activities with the United States are not allowed.

- A. Sending students to the United States is not allowed under the Pipeline program.

21. Does the US Department of State expect to see a certain percentage of the budget designated as cost share?

- A. Cost share must be included, but no specific percentage is required. The amount must not be zero.

22. Will the Awardee be expected to pay subsidies to employers to support the fellowships?

- A. Awardees should not use grant funds to pay subsidies to employers to support the fellowship. However, this type of subsidy could potentially be proposed as cost share.

23. Can the Pilot activities be limited to employers in two or three of the countries named in the NOFO?

- A. Yes, the pilot activities can initially be limited to employers in two or three countries in the first year with a plan for later expansion. Please note that the initiative aims to place students in jobs in their country of origin rather than in their country of study.